

First Annual Report
2001-2002



Los Angeles County Policy Roundtable for Child Care



Message from the Outgoing Chair

It is always challenging to establish a new entity, to take an idea and make it a reality. The Policy Roundtable for Child Care (Roundtable) was launched amid high expectations on the part of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, who saw the role of the Roundtable as providing leadership in identifying solutions to the long-standing issue of access to affordable and quality child care services.

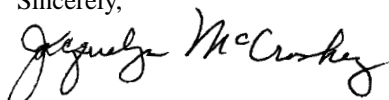
Recognizing the complexity of this issue, the Board of Supervisors recruited a number of subject matter experts, who also have a passion for improving the child care and development system, to serve on the Roundtable. Over the past year, these individuals have worked together and given life to the idea of the Policy Roundtable for Child Care.

Members of the Roundtable are proud of the organization's accomplishments during this past year. Together, we have established operating procedures, clarified the "roadmap" laid-out by the Board of Supervisors; cemented the Roundtable's relationships with colleague organizations; and oriented staff.

During the Roundtable's inaugural year, the State of California experienced a precipitous drop in revenue. The Roundtable monitored the potential impact of this budget crisis on the child care and development sector, presented testimony to the Women's Caucus, and reported to the Board of Supervisors. In addition, the Roundtable worked with the Regional Planning Department to improve the County's proposed zoning ordinance, and suggested improvements to the Child Care Grant and Loan Program.

It has been an honor to serve as the Chair of the Policy Roundtable for Child Care. I believe that we are off to a promising start and have the capacity to identify meaningful solutions that result in increased access to affordable and quality child care services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jacquelyn McCroskey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jacquelyn" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "McCroskey".

Jacquelyn McCroskey, DSW

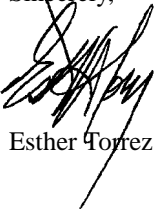
Message from the Incoming Chair

During the Roundtable's first year of operation, each of the members developed a deeper appreciation for the factors that influence the intensely-personal decisions of individual families who are seeking or using child development services, and the global factors that influence the public policy decisions affecting funding for and regulation of child development services. The Roundtable recognizes that the demand for child development services in our County far exceeds the supply; that the quality of care is not consistently high; and that affordable care is particularly scarce. The Roundtable understands the scope of the challenges before us, yet, we are confident that the Policy Roundtable for Child Care is well situated to strengthen and expand the child care infrastructure in Los Angeles County. Our confidence is based on the support that the Board of Supervisors has demonstrated toward improving the child development arena, the skills and commitment of our members, and the range of community partners that the Roundtable has been able to work with.

In the coming year, the Roundtable will continue to work with County departments to ensure that appropriate policies and practices are in place, and with colleague organizations to address emerging issues. The Roundtable will engage the various sectors, including child development, research, and financing, in a series of dialogues to inform the policy recommendations designed to address local child care challenges.

My task, as Chair of the Policy Roundtable for Child Care, is to ensure that our individual and collective commitments are channeled into action that improves the child care infrastructure of Los Angeles County. We have set an ambitious agenda for ourselves and welcome the participation of individuals and organizations that share a desire to strengthen and expand this infrastructure.

Sincerely,



Esther Torrez

Mission Statement and Background

Roundtable Mission

The mission of the Policy Roundtable for Child Care is to serve as the official County body on all matters relating to child care, working in collaboration with the Child Care Planning Committee and the Children's Planning Council, to build and strengthen the child care system and infrastructure in the County by providing policy recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.



Background

On March 21, 2000, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors stated, “The County of Los Angeles is in a unique position to provide leadership and to identify solutions to the long-standing issue of access to affordable and quality child care services.” To realize that leadership role, the Board of Supervisors adopted the recommendations presented by the Child Care Futures Committee, a joint effort of the Children’s Planning Council and the Child Care Planning Committee, and created the Policy Roundtable for Child Care.

In its report to the Board of Supervisors, the Child Care Futures Committee stressed the need to mobilize County departments, the larger community, and other government sectors for the purpose of building and strengthening the child care system. The Roundtable was seen as the vehicle to bridge and galvanize these disparate sectors. According to the Child Care Futures Committee, the Roundtable would function as a results-oriented, technical team of advisors focusing on the County and its role in strengthening the child care infrastructure. In addition, the Roundtable would be charged to work collaboratively and strategically to develop solutions to the long-standing child care challenges of this County.

The Child Care Futures Committee recommended that the Roundtable membership be composed of representatives from seven organizations, four County departments, and two nominees from each of the five Board offices. The Board of Supervisors was encouraged to include in their nominations representatives from academia/research, business, community/legal advocacy, philanthropy, and child development. Appointments to the Roundtable began in the summer of 2000, and the Board of Supervisors made its final appointment in March 2002.



Roundtable Members

Esther Torrez, *Chair*
First District Nominee
Community Enhancement Corporation

Bonnie Bailer, Esq., *Vice-Chair*
Child Care Planning Committee
Northridge Hospital Medical Center

Renatta Cooper
Los Angeles County Children and Families
First-Proposition 10 Commission
Pacific Oaks College

Duane Dennis
Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles
Child and Family Services

Alisa Drakodaidis
Chief Administrative Office
Los Angeles County

Carollee Howes, Ph.D.
Third District Nominee
University of California Los Angeles

Jan Isenberg
Los Angeles County Office of Education

Rebecca Kilburn, Ph.D.
Second District Nominee
RAND

My-Nga Le
First District Nominee
Community Advocate

Jacquelyn McCroskey, DSW
Third District Nominee
University of Southern California

Margo Morales
Department of Parks and Recreation
Los Angeles County

Matt Rezvani
Fourth District Nominee
BP

Arlene Rhine
Southern California Association for the
Education of Young Children

Connie Russell
Fifth District Nominee
Elementary Education

Pearlene Saffold
Department of Public Social Services
Los Angeles County

Carmen Schroeder
Los Angeles Unified School District

Jayne Shapiro
Fifth District Nominee
Founder, KidSafe

Mary Soth
Fourth District Nominee
Early Childhood Educator

Carolyn Wilder, Ed.D.
Second District Nominee
West Los Angeles College

Harriette Williams, Ed.D.
Commission for Children and Family Services

Robert Wiltse
Department of Children and Families Services
Los Angeles County

Accomplishments: January 2001- June 2002

Getting Started

- Jacquelyn McCroskey, DSW, and Bonnie Bailer, Esq., were elected Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, at the second meeting of the Roundtable in February 2001. Roundtable bylaws were developed and adopted in May 2001, and orienting of Office of Child Care staff was completed in November 2001. The 21st Roundtable member was appointed in March 2002.
- The Roundtable became oriented to the County system, hearing presentations from:
 - The Community Development Commission and the Department of Public Social Services on the Child Care Grant and Loan Program;
 - The Department of Health Services on the Los Angeles Health Survey; and
 - The Department of Public Social Services and the Children's Planning Council on funding issues related to Long-Term Family Self-Sufficiency.

Forging Connections

- Members were elected to serve on related bodies, including:
 - Rebecca Kilburn, representing the Roundtable on the Children's Planning Council;
 - My-Nga Le, representing the Roundtable on the Los Angeles County Children and Families First-Proposition 10 Commission; and
 - Jacquelyn McCroskey, representing the Roundtable on the New Directions Task Force.
- Roundtable members served as panelists at a presentation sponsored by the Southern California Association for Philanthropy and the Children's Planning Council on December 11, 2001. This presentation, which addressed the demand for child care in Los Angeles County, the quality of available care, and the role of government in financing, sparked a lively discussion and offered new insights to the participants, including representatives of philanthropic organizations.
- Roundtable members have worked extensively with the Los Angeles Children and Families First-Proposition 10 Commission, providing child care supply, need, and trend data.

Legislative Activities

- The Roundtable presented testimony at the Women's Caucus public hearing in Los Angeles on October 29, 2001. This testimony gave voice to key issues impacting low-income working families seeking and/or using subsidized child care, child care providers, and program administrators.
- The Roundtable's Legislative Committee convened its first community forum on March 6, 2002, to assess budget and legislative priorities for the final year of the 2001-02 Legislative Session. An analysis of the proposed State Budget for 2002-03 was submitted to the Board of Supervisors, incorporating the concerns articulated at the community forum.
- The Roundtable hosted a dialogue with Rita Saenz, Director of the California Department of Social Services, and members of the child care community on May 9, 2002. To the relief of many in the child care community, Ms. Saenz announced the Governor's decision to withdraw his proposal to restructure the subsidized child care system, which involved such changes as eliminating calWORKs Stage 3 Child Care. She also described the ongoing implications of the State budget crisis on the child development arena, and new policies for releasing information on persons working in the field. The dialogue created a new communication channel for the Roundtable and members of the child care and development community.



Improving County Practices Related to Child Care Development

- The 88 cities within Los Angeles County were surveyed regarding their child care zoning ordinances. The results of the survey are available at: <http://cao.co.la.ca.us/ccp/default.htm>
- The Roundtable effectively advocated for improvements in the County's proposed zoning ordinance related to large family child care homes and child care centers, resulting in recommendations by the Planning Commission to ease regulations and reduce fees.
- Selected Roundtable members serve as Advisors to the Office of Child Care and Child Care Planning Committee, providing technical assistance to the research projects currently underway and to developing future research activities.

Looking Ahead

- Annual elections were held in June 2002. Esther Torrez was elected Chair, and Bonnie Bailer was elected to remain as Vice-Chair.



Critical Issues Affecting Child Care and Development Services

During the past 18 months, the State of California experienced a dramatic loss in revenue and the Governor proposed a major overhaul of the subsidized child care system. The Governor's proposal was tabled in May 2002, but new and draconian cost-saving measures are expected to emerge during future budget negotiations.

Funds from the California Departments of Education and Social Services subsidize child care expenses for approximately 150,000 children in Los Angeles County. These funds make it possible for tens of thousands of low-income parents to participate in the work force; and support, directly or indirectly, an estimated 35,000 child care jobs in Los Angeles County. The subsidized child care system is an integral component of the local child care system.

Efforts to modify this system must begin with a commitment to improving services to children and families.

Working families of all incomes face stiff competition when seeking high-quality child development services. Even though there is high demand, child care programs tend to operate on extremely narrow profit margins, with little or no resources for a capital development. As a result, the child care sector, which includes public, proprietary, and non-profit operators, has not been able to keep pace with the growing demand for services. New mechanisms are needed to streamline the development process, and new resources are needed to build and renovate child care facilities.



Various studies have documented the positive and lasting impacts of high quality early education programs on young children. Research has also shown that a well-educated and well-compensated workforce is key to providing high quality care and early education services. This information has not, however, been effectively integrated into public policy or child care and development program practices.

Next Steps for the Policy Roundtable for Child Care

In the next twelve-month period, the Roundtable will: 1) continue to collaborate with the Child Care Planning Committee and Children's Planning Council to assess County department practices and policies that impact the need for and access to quality child development services and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on these issues; 2) refine its advocacy capacity, in collaboration with the Child Care Planning Committee and other community partners, to positively affect policies at the local, State, and Federal levels related to the availability, quality, and affordability of child development services; and 3) promote practices and policies that build and strengthen the child care system and infrastructure in the County by providing policy recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.



The Roundtable is responsible for developing policy recommendations that are “based on solid research, economic forecasts, projected demographic shifts and trends, and Federal and State policies.” Consistent with that charge, the Roundtable will convene a series of dialogue sessions, bringing national experts and local practitioners to the table to define solutions that build on

best practices and are tailored to address the child care challenges in Los Angeles County. The findings of these sessions will inform the work of the Roundtable and the local child care communities.

Summaries of each session will be posted 90 days after the session, on the Internet at <http://cao.co.la.ca.us/ccp/default.htm>

*Filling the Gap:
Strategic Development of Child Care Facilities*

September 2002

This session will focus on resources and strategies to address the child care center capital development in Los Angeles County.

*Affordable Child Care:
From Oxymoron to Reality*

November 2002

Funding for day-to-day operations of all types of quality child care options will be addressed in this session, including a review of traditional and innovative revenue sources.

*Improving Child Care Quality:
Strategies for Producing Quantifiable Change*

January 2003

This session will review cases where the quality of child care in individual programs and across systems, was improved and sustained. In addition, the session will examine the “additional cost” of quality.

Raising the Bar on Child Care Worker Qualifications and Compensation

March 2003

Various initiatives have been launched to address the historically poor compensation of the child care workforce. This session will examine local compensation levels, as well as the results emerging from efforts in California and the County, to link increased education to increased compensation.

Funding

All Roundtable members serve without compensation. The Chief Administration Office, Service Integration Branch, Office of Child Care provides staff support for the Roundtable.



Meeting Schedule and Contact Information

Regular meetings of the Policy Roundtable for Child Care are scheduled for the second Wednesday of the month, at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012. The public is welcome to attend Roundtable meetings. Please contact the Office of Child Care to verify the conference room prior to the meeting.

The Office of Child Care provides staff support to the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and can be contacted by:

- Telephone: (213) 974-4103
- Fax: (213) 217-5106
- Web Site: <http://cao.co.la.ca.us/ccp/default.htm>
- E-mail: kmalaske@cao.co.la.ca.us

Office of Child Care Staff Directory

- Kathleen Malaske-Samu (213) 974-2440
Director
- Laura Escobedo (213) 974-4102
Child Care Coordinator
- Lesley Blacher (213) 974-4603
Research Coordinator
- Sally Garcia (213) 974-4103
Secretary
- Jacquelyn Ponce (213) 974-1372
Support Staff

The Office of Child Care is located within the Service Integration Branch of the Chief Administrative Office.



Photo Credits

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Page 4	Anna Bing Arnold Children's Center
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